

Dear FCC,

I wish to comment on the media and the proposed ownership changes. I am disturbed by the current state of the media and believe further media consolidation will be detrimental to the public.

As you know, news reporting can actually change future events. For example, consider reports of the attack on the United States battleship in the Gulf of Tonkin.

Or the babies being removed from incubators in Kuwait. Both reports turned out to be untrue yet caused the United States to enter into war. Consider also the reports from My Lai or the Pentagon papers. Truthful events which stopped the war. A modern day parallel exists in Mr. Bush and Mr. Blair declaring that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) stated that Iraq is six months away from developing a nuclear weapon. Three weeks later, the Washington Times reporter contacted the IAEA which stated that the IAEA had never issued such a report. In the meantime however, the Senate voted to give the President the authority to wage war on Iraq. The American people and the elected officials are listening and watching the news, but are not being informed of actual events.

In the current day, the news is not being disseminated to the public. Are you aware that in the coming war in Iraq, nuclear weapons are being advocated for use by the United States given four different circumstances? I did not know that until very recently. If I lived in Los Angeles I would have known as a L.A. Times reader. But I do not live in Los Angeles, I live outside Houston. So the news about the advocated use of nuclear bombs by the United States does not reach my city? Did you also know that in the Gulf War, ninety percent of the bombs were dumb, carpet bombs? According to the Air Force, only ten percent of the bombs were smart bombs. Why then were all the media images of the smart bombs, and none of the dumb bombs? The American public is not informed.

I find it disturbing that in recent events, a CNN executive was quoted as saying that CNN would not be covering the deaths of Afghan civilians as that would be "perverse". Since when is such truthful news events perverse? Would then the My Lai pictures also be considered perverse? Would the American citizens have preferred not to view such images? Would we still be at war in Vietnam?

I listened to parts of the Forum on Media Ownership at Columbia University on January 16, 2003. I heard the news executive advocating for media consolidation since as he stated, do you like to see your stock portfolio go up or down? Reporting on national and

international events is more important than a stock portfolio (mine included). The corporations already influence our government through campaign contributions. Must the corporations also determine the news we see and hear? As the news executives admit, their objective is profit, not the reporting and dissemination of the news.

The FCC has a stated goal of diversity, localism, and competition. The media ownership rules need to be strengthened, not loosened if such goals are to be achieved. I am fortunate to live in an area served by Pacifica and a PBS station which airs Bill Moyers NOW show. On Pacifica, there is a show for Latinos, African Americans, gay and lesbians, prisoners, and vegans. While I am a white female and not in any of those groups, I believe it so important that such groups have a program airing their issues. Mainstream media is not giving us programs which are local or diverse or competitive. Knowing the importance of the news in shaping world views and thus world events, please ensure that the media gives us the news.

Thank you for your time in reading this letter.

Maria Bohnert

Do you Yahoo!?

Yahoo! Mail Plus - Powerful. Affordable. Sign up now.
<http://mailplus.yahoo.com>